



# The Anglican Digest

SUMMER A.D. 2016

TM

VOL. 58 NO. 2



The Church of the Incarnation  
Dallas, Texas  
*Member of the Parish Partner Plan*

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# The Anglican Digest

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## ABOUT THE COVER

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You can see more photos, and learn more about the parish, from their website: <https://incarnation.org/>, and their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/IncarnationDFW/>.

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# The Anglican Digest

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TOM WALKER, GENERAL MANAGER

805 COUNTY ROAD 102

EUREKA SPRINGS, AR 72632-9705

EMAIL: [TWALKER@ANGLICANDIGEST.ORG](mailto:TWALKER@ANGLICANDIGEST.ORG)

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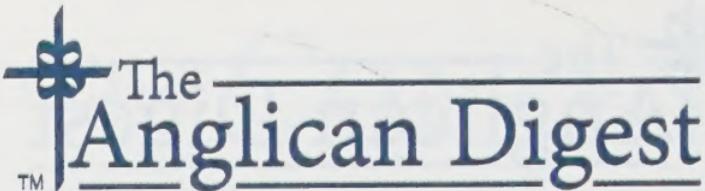
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## FROM THE EDITORS

For this issue, we asked people to choose a prayer from the Book of Common Prayer and write about it. We wanted both to celebrate the treasure that is our prayer book, and encourage our readers to stop and think about the words we say each week. As my father once said, “We are least likely to hear what we are most familiar with. Repetition of liturgy is good to ingrain it in our minds, but we need to think about what we are saying.”

For a little more than ten years now, I have been serving as a verger at my parish church. Several years ago, my fellow vergers and I sat down to re-work the way our Servers’ Guild functions; one of the things we decided to do was reinstate testing for the servers each time they rise in rank, and one of the things we decided to include in those rank tests was recitation of a prayer from memory. (For the first test, they must recite the Prayer of Humble Access [p. 337]; for the second, the General Confession [p. 331]; for the third, the Nicene Creed [p. 327-328].) We try to make it as unintimidating as we can — the verger testing them will say the first few words, and then recite the prayer along with the server, so it’s very similar to the way they will say the prayer during a service — but we decided that we wanted our servers to know these prayers by heart. (Initially, they were supposed to memorize the Post Communion Prayer [p. 339], as well as certain prayers from Morning Prayer, as well — specifically, the Confession of Sins [p. 41-42] and the Apostle’s Creed [p. 53-54] — but we eventually dropped that requirement once our parish no longer had Choral Matins on Sundays.)

Three years ago, poet and novelist Brad Leithauser wrote a column for *The New Yorker* in which he argued in favor of memorizing poems; in the course of his column, he mentioned his former colleague at Mount Holyoke College, Soviet dissident and poet Joseph Brodsky. According to Leithauser, Brodsky required his students to memorize hundreds of lines of poetry each semester; he did this because he “felt he was preparing them for the future; they might need such verses later in life. His own biography provided a stirring example of the virtues of mental husbandry. He’d been grateful for every scrap of poetry he had in his head” during the years when he was being arrested, interrogated, put in mental institutions, charged with social parasitism, sentenced to five years of hard labor in an Arctic village (his sentence was commuted after 18 months), and finally effectively expelled from his native land. Leithauser argued that “memorized poems are a sort of larder, laid up against the hungers of an extended period of solitude.” Memorization, he said, “provides us with knowledge of a qualitatively and physiologically different variety: you take the poem inside you, into your brain chemistry if not your blood, and you know it at a deeper, bodily level than if you simply read it ... ‘If we do not learn by heart, the heart does not feel the rhythms of poetry as echoes or variations of its own insistent beat.’”

*The Atlantic Monthly* has run a series of articles under the heading “By Heart”, in which authors share and discuss their favorite passages in literature. American poet Billy Collins described the effect of memorizing poems as “the pleasure of companionship”: “When you internalize a poem, it becomes something inside of you. You’re able to walk around with it. It becomes a companion ... something you take with you, all the

time. It's no longer just something in a textbook — it's something that you've placed within yourself." In another entry for the same series, essayist Caleb Crain wrote that the danger of memorizing something "is that it works into the way you think."

When people ask me why we require our servers to memorize prayers, these are among the things that occur to me. Yes, we want them to participate in the service, to join with their fellow parishioners in prayer, and to be able to do so without having to dive for a prayer book and find the right page, at short notice and while wearing gloves. More importantly, though, we want these prayers to work their way into our servers' hearts and minds, to become part of them, something they carry with them always, something they can draw on, that can come to them unbidden when they face difficulties and losses, trials and tribulations, when they or those they love are "in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity". [p. 329] Like Brodsky with his students, we feel that we are preparing them for the future.

It isn't hard to appreciate the beautiful, artful language given to us by Thomas Cranmer. Many people have written on the subject — including, again in *The Atlantic Monthly*, James Fallows and Benjamin Schwarz, the latter reviewing "The Book of Common Prayer", in which Brian Cummings argued that our prayer book "has seeped into the collective consciousness more profoundly than that of any other book written in English, even the Bible." Fallows wrote that it "permanently shaped my idea of how an English sentence should sound. ... [the] wording may seem antique but [the] rhythms retain a classic beauty." He referred to passages that "have stuck in my mind as the pure

idea of how sentences should be paced, should repeat for emphasis yet also vary, should end."

I know exactly what Fallows means, but that is just a side benefit of the Book of Common Prayer — it's the gravy, not the meat. The soaring, majestic, searingly beautiful language we encounter in its pages is truly wonderful, and is of great value in and of itself, but the real value of our prayer book lies in what else it gives us. To borrow again from my father, worship gives us a workable structure for our lives and our relationship to God, it centers our decisions on God, and makes everything fit together. The Book of Common Prayer provides the structure and order of our worship, and does so with dignity, humility, and beauty, in words that have brought comfort and soothed troubled souls for centuries. There are words contained within it that have become engraved upon my heart and my mind, have become a part of me, have indeed helped to form me. I am endlessly grateful. And I know that I am not alone.

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# A PRAYER GRAFTED INWARDLY IN THE HEART

DEREK OLSEN  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy*

*Spirit, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.*  
— The General Thanksgiving (BCP, pp. 58-9 and 71-2)

Of all the prayers in the prayer book, there's one I keep coming back to. It's not my fault — really — I blame the book entirely. The General Thanksgiving ends both Morning and Evening Prayer so, like it or not, I literally keep coming back to it every day.

Since I'm a scholar of texts, I would be remiss if I didn't say that I like it for its words and its meanings; I certainly do. But there's more to it than that. I like the feel of it in my mouth. There's a certain aesthetic pleasure in the rhythm of the lines. There's a certain internal thrill when you master the cadence to make "but above all for thine inestimable love" synch properly with the immediately following "in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ."

In a world that privileges communication in short, terse words or even shorter abbreviations, each time I encounter it is an opportunity to bask in the complexities of constructions composed in an earlier age: not only “inestimable” but “unfeignedly.” And, yes, I confess that there are mornings before the coffee has kicked in where its utterance takes on the character of polysyllabic glossolalia rolling over my tongue rather than sober, thoughtful prayer.

This is a prayer that makes much of sound. This isn’t a prayer chiefly written to be read but to be heard and experienced both orally and aurally; there are plays of sound that work best when you feel your mouth make them and hear and appreciate the results with your ears. While the rhyme of “creation, preservation” in the sixth line is the most obvious, the alliteration is what always gets to me.

If you’ll remember back to poetry class, we’re all used to rhyme. Rhyme is standard; we think of it as normal. Rhyme — where two words share a single ending sound — is a common feature of the ends of lines in English poetry. That’s the way it’s been for several hundred years. Alliteration is a little different; it’s where words or blocks of words start with the same sound. Less familiar to modern ears, it was the chief poetic device of Old English poetry (no, I don’t mean Shakespeare, and I don’t even mean Chaucer — you’re still four hundred years too close to the present).

We hear the alliteration first in a couple of little runs: the “h” in “humble and hearty thanks”, the “g” in “for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.” Where it really comes into its own, though, is towards the end of the prayer. After our initial “blessing,” we move to “be-

seech[ing]" and there we pray this:

*... and that we may show forth thy praise, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service...*

Meaning-wise, we're fussing with what it means to really be thankful. We're working with what praise looks like once we stop talking and have to put it into action. What does it look like to stop talking about praise, and to actually incarnate it? Sound-wise, we're getting into a rhythm here — we're creating an expectation. We have the "l" in both "lips" and "lives," then the "s" in "selves" and "service;" with two alliterative passages in close conjunction like that, it leaves us itching for a third to complete the pattern and then we get:

*... and walking before thee in [it must be right around the corner now!] holiness and righteousness all our days;*"

But — that's an "h" and an "r." That's not alliteration by any stretch; rather, we get a poetic bait and switch. "Walking in holiness and righteousness all our days" is a call-back to the key canticle of Morning Prayer, the Song of Zechariah and, turning on the prayer's use of the word "serve" in the last alliterative "service" swings us into a quotation from the canticle: "That we ... might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

In short, the prayer says, if you want to know what truly lived praise looks like, you have to go back to the Scriptures. You have to go back to that call to live a holy and righteous life. You need to go back to Zechariah's hope and prayer for his child (John the Baptizer), a child who lived holiness and righteousness not in a cloud of sanctimoniousness but in rebellion against a spiritu-

al system that wasn't hitting people hard enough where they lived. Holiness and righteousness isn't about prissy superiority, but the honest comprehension and communication of hard spiritual realities. It's about being the kind of preacher who drew and affected the harlots and the Roman collaborators, the tax collectors and soldiers who Luke shows us asking John for advice.

Not only that, I hear this prayer inviting us to take upon ourselves that same calling to which Zechariah called his son: to share the knowledge of salvation, that it's about remission of sin, that the message with which we've been entrusted is one of God's tender mercy breaking upon us to give us light and lead our feet into the paths of peace.

The prayer's repetition of sound sets us up for something important, but instead of perpetuating the allitera-

tive pattern, we receive a profound redirection back to the canticle to ponder our spiritual purpose.

This right here: this is why the prayer book is so important to me. Meaning and sound and Scripture are bound so tightly together that there's no point in attempting to determine where one ends and the other begins. This is the prayer that clogs my ears and gets stuck in my head, that digs its roots into my soul, and insists that it's not done until it's grafted inwardly in my heart to bring forth the fruit of good living to the honor and glory of God.

---

## SUNDAY SCRABBLE

Holt M. Jenkins, in

*The Episcopalian*

Re-printed from the Summer 1971 issue of TAD

On Sunday mornings before we leave home for church, things are pretty wild: Jim-

my isn't out of bed yet, Johnny can't find his shoes, Mary can't find her hat, somebody has hidden the offering envelopes, and Daddy can't get into the bathroom.

Everybody is running around — out to the car, back to the house; doors slam and children cry; mother is yelling at the children; and Daddy is growling about being late again. All of it makes Sunday seem like the worst day in the week — it's enough to make you lose your religion.

By the time all of us finally get into the car, everybody's exhausted, tempers are hot, harsh words have been exchanged, some of God's people aren't speaking to others, and we're not feeling ready to say the General Confession — but that's what we all need.

Sometimes, it seems that we all go to meet the Lord in church in the worst possible

frame of mind; it can take the whole ride to cool us off and calm us down.

We don't seem to be able to solve the Sunday scramble —even getting up earlier doesn't help. There is something we can do, though, after we get into the car: As we pull away from the curb, let someone in the family say, "The Lord be with you"; then all can answer, "And with thy spirit." Then, the family can recite the Collect for the day — it's right there in your Prayer Book, and it's easy to find. [Or pull up <http://www.stbedeproductions.com/breviary/>.]

That is one way to get to know the Collects better; it also helps do something with all that haste and hurry and bad feeling. It makes for a much happier ride to church, and it helps us get ready for our part in the service. Try it sometime and see if it doesn't.

## EVEN THE DOGS... FINDING MERCY IN HUMILITY

THE VERY REV. KEVIN MORRIS  
RECTOR, CHURCH OF THE ASCEN-  
SION, ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY

In the Gospel of Mark, a Gentile woman throws herself down at the feet of Jesus and begs him to cast a demon out of her daughter. (7:24-30) At first, Jesus hesitates, saying, “*Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.*” In Matthew’s version of the same scene, Jesus states more plainly, “*I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” Jesus is very clearly a devout Jew, through and through: he keeps kosher, he worships in the synagogue and at the temple, he is extremely well versed in the Hebrew scriptures, and despite quibbling with the sect of the Pharisees over *how* the law should be observed, there is no question that he believes

*that it should be.* Yet this Gentile woman is not easily discouraged; kneeling before the Lord she says, “*Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.*”

Jesus has mercy on her and replies, “*For saying that, you may go — the demon has left your daughter.*”

I think of this scene often, because in my parish before Communion each Sunday, we kneel down and say the Prayer of Humble Access, which evokes the image of someone gathering the crumbs from beneath God’s table:

*We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us*

*therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of thy  
dear son Jesus Christ, and  
to drink his blood, that  
we may evermore dwell in  
him, and he in us. Amen.*

I must admit that this is my favorite prayer in the entire Book of Common Prayer. As our prayers go, it's not terribly ancient; Archbishop Cranmer wrote it in 1548, with the intention that it would be a private prayer recited by the priest, not by the entire congregation. Part of his inspiration for this prayer came from the exchange between Jesus and the Gentile woman. In our current prayer book, this prayer is said immediately before the congregation is invited to receive Communion; kneeling down and saying this prayer before we receive Communion is meant to invoke the image of the woman who had no reason to expect anything from this Jewish preacher.

I think it is a great pity that this prayer is so often neglected and underused in so many of our churches. I suspect that for many people it is the phrase “we are not worthy” that hangs on the tongue or leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. Maybe this is a symptom of our church having lived through a long period of influence by “I’m OK, You’re OK” popular psychology, or of being more focused on therapy than theology. But if we lament our church being led down the road of “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism”—that is, being more concerned with feeling good about ourselves than having a living relationship with God—then maybe the Prayer of Humble Access is precisely the prayer that we need to be praying, fervently and regularly.

The phrase “we are not worthy” is not self-flagellation, but a necessary statement of fact. We broken, sinful, and

fragile human beings are not worthy to approach the Lord Jesus. We need to admit that. As Gentiles living in foreign lands in the 21st century (most of us), we have no reason to expect any attention from a Jewish preacher in the 1st century. We need to recognize that, too. Like the Gentile woman in Mark's gospel, we have no right to the grace that comes from God; we receive it by one thing and one thing alone: God's mercy.

The most important part of the Prayer of Humble Access, and the part I think many people miss, is not what it says about us, but what it says about God:

*"We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies."*

*"Thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy."*

*"Grant us therefore, gracious Lord..."*

This prayer has so much more to say about God than it does about us. It is true that we are not worthy, but Jesus is gracious and merciful to us anyway, because that is his nature; that is who he is. Furthermore, we take his body and his blood into ourselves so that we may be partakers of that merciful nature. Our hope, our desire, is to be transformed by those elements of flesh and blood so that we may "share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share in our humanity," as the Collect of the Incarnation puts it [p. 200], so that we too can learn to act with mercy like his.

The Gentile woman in Mark's Gospel doesn't trust in her own worthiness or deserving; she trusts in Christ's mercy and grace. She shows Jesus that she is willing to accept whatever he is willing to offer

her, even if it is just a crumb, and to do so gladly. It is her profound humility that moves him to grant her request. Jesus values the commandments of God, and he teaches his disciples to follow them. He teaches his disciples to make good judgments in their actions and in their behaviors — but, more than that, by his words and deeds, he teaches those who follow him that mercy always triumphs over judgment.

If we are to be faithful followers of Christ, then it is more important for us to show mercy than good judgment. We may not be able to be consistently good, but we can be consistently merciful. It was not Christ's good judgment that the woman in the gospel was appealing to; it was his mercy. And it was his mercy that moved him to grant her request, not her worthiness. The same is true for us as his followers. Each

and every week I kneel down and acknowledge my unworthiness, that's true — but more importantly, I proclaim God's mercy. The true joy in being a Christian comes from knowing that I don't have to be worthy, because I worship a God who is merciful. I do, however need to learn to receive this gift, this grace from God, so that I can then show it and give it to others.

I am not worthy to receive God's grace, nor am I worthy to receive Christ's body and blood at the altar, but that does not turn me away from the altar or lead me down paths of self-condemnation, because I know and proclaim every week that Christ offers himself to me anyway, in spite of all my faults. No one is worthy of eating at God's table. Who could be? It is all the grace of God. God's love and mercy are free gifts, they are not things that we earn or buy. I give thanks to God

for calling me to his table, but every week I am also grateful for the chance to kneel beside that Gentile woman and remember that it is the mercy and grace of God alone that allows us to evermore dwell in him and he in us.

---

## WHERE TRUE JOY IS FOUND

THE REV. DANIEL CLARKE, SSC  
CHURCH OF THE HOLY  
COMMUNION, CHARLESTON, SC

I have followed bumper-sticker theology for years now, gauging the intellectual tenor and faith foundation among the American public. I have seen “My karma ran over your dogma”. “He who dies with the most toys wins”, and the indicative “My kid beat up your honor student”. The Jesus fish is tailed closely by the Darwin amphibian as a trunk ornament, but the dark horse of the highways has to be the almost innocuous “Question authority” sticker, which for

me seems to resonate best with all my off-road experiences – where two or three are gathered to talk about what’s true and what’s not. Ours is a climate of questions, of untutored free thought, and of individual rights often unencumbered by concomitant responsibilities, perhaps equally in Church and outside it. Unity in the Faith is not as popular as it once was: we are proud of our party spirit. I imagine this could be declining now — I don’t get out much — but it has been true in my adult life since 1970, and it may just as well not be declining.

Imagine my encouragement this year, then, to round the corner onto the Fifth Sunday in Lent and to pray that marvelous Collect of the Day again:

*O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people that they may love*

*the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

(BCP p. 167)

The 1979 prayer book moved this collect from the Fourth Sunday after Easter, which is where it had been in every prayer book since 1549, and where it stood in prefix to the traditional Eastertide Epistle and Gospel lessons of that day, which point toward the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost — that bright, fiery gift of God, by whom the unruly wills and affections of sinful men will be ordered in the post-Pentecostal Catholic Church, the one gift of God who could by

his grace conform our minds (and our wills and our hearts) away from their unruliness — their disordered, unauthorized attachments — into a likeness, a unity, a teleology which is according to the Will of God. He was the Authority of the Apostles, this Holy Spirit, and the brethren who heard Peter on Pentecost Day heard the Holy Spirit speaking through him. Their response was not to insist that their karma had overridden Peter's dogma of the Resurrection, nor that they would just like to count their toys without so many uncomfortable ideas at once, nor that they would like to get hold of Peter and beat him up for his assumed authority. By some miracle — you and I might say, by the miracle of the Holy Spirit resonating in them at Peter's preaching of Jesus — the response of the gathered crowd was to be convicted, to be cut to their unruly wills and affections, and to ask the

Apostles, “Brethren what shall we do?” How will you direct us faithfully in following what we have heard and seen in you? Theirs was a questioning of authority which asked for more rather than less: “Brethren, what shall we do now that we have heard you speak with authority?” And St. Peter gave them the age-old answer of the Church which has been echoed through all the Christian centuries over the face of this planet.

*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.*

(Acts 2:38-39)

Being baptized into Jesus Christ, being taught all things that have been commanded

by him through the pillar and ground of truth which is his Church, having the testimony of the holy Scriptures in witness to the Church’s teaching, and knowing that there is an Authority we call the Blessed Trinity over, around, throughout, and within this Body of Christ: is there any possible greater guarantee that the unity of the Church is a gift coming from both inside and outside her, from the Holy Spirit? What gathering of men and women — ragged and ornery and fissiparous as we know ourselves to be — what gathering of humankind, anywhere or at any time, has stood like the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of our Creed through the ages for two thousand years? What other group composed of such pride-filled, arrogant, corrupt, selfish, venal, murderous, lusting, obnoxious, silly human beings like you and me has been able to survive us? Only the Church,

mightier than empires, has the gift of the Holy Spirit within her to see her past all our crusades and inquisitions, our Henry VIIIs and our Oliver Cromwells, our classical diversifiers and their modern-day epigone — the sundry and manifold changes of the world. Only the gift of the Holy Spirit can pull us from the quagmire of our doubts and questionings, our party spirit, our private likes and dislikes, our fear of authority. Only the Holy Spirit can order our hearts and minds and wills, heal the wounds in our psyches which set us on outward trajectories, and remake us in and after the pattern of our Savior Jesus Christ, where it is no longer the doubtful, questioning, autonomous *I* who live, but Christ who lives in me. Then — and long before that ultimate day! — I can love the thing which Christ commands and desire that which he promises.

Our intellectual and spiritual climate may need such healing today — although, since I don't get out much, I may be behind the times; it may be that the return to Faith and Hope and Love is well under way. I hope it is, I pray it is. I can only join those who put their trust in Christ's Mercy, because I know not only that is where my own heart is fixed, but also where true joys are to be found.

“Prayer Book Spirituality is a discipline of humility, submitting our subjectivity to a liturgy that is larger than we are instead of bending the liturgy to fit our subjectivity, thereby insuring we are never challenged. Some of the prayers that are most central to my faith today are the ones I would have preferred to change or omit in days gone by.”

~ Dan Edwards,  
Fourth Bishop of Nevada

## DO WE LISTEN?

TADDLED FROM A PARISH BULLETIN

**O**ne Sunday, while serving at the altar, I realized how little I actually listen to the words of the Prayer Book, and how infrequently I am fully aware of their meanings. We had reached that point in the Eucharist when we recite the beautiful prayer that Christ gave us; as I was repeating the words "Forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us," I seemed to hear those words anew, and wondered if I do forgive those who trespass against me. I have known the prayer all my life, have said it countless times, and the words slip easily from my mouth. Careless repetition had allowed the prayer to become mere words without meaning; but now they are rich and rewarding. Because of my experience that Sunday morning, I am rediscovering parts of the Creed,

and the Prayer of Consecration, and the Gloria. To slide over the familiar and repeat it inattentively is, I suspect, a common and human failing, and we are into the habit before we notice it. I am learning to shake off my lethargy, to call it that, to pay attention to what I am saying, and to listen to what the priest reads from the prayer book each Sunday. I am being restored, refreshed, and renewed – and, more than ever, I look forward to participating in our life of worship.

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## LIGHTENING OUR DARKNESS

THE REV. CANON DALE COLEMAN  
RECTOR, ST. GEORGE'S EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH, BELLEVILLE, IL

I grew up in a home in which the Savior's presence was palpable. In the Salvation Army of my youth, my mother (an officer, as my dad was) saw to it that we prayed to give thanks at meal times. We also had family devotions every day after supper. One of us four children would read from the King James Version of the Bible — was there any other? — then each of us would pray extemporaneously, before my father or mother leading us in the Lord's Prayer. This was our daily routine. At night, my mother would pray before going to bed, and we would sneak in to listen — she prayed aloud — and generally try to distract her, which she took good-naturedly. We heard her pray for each of us, as well as for myriad oth-

er concerns. (I can't tell you how strong a sense of safety this gave her children.) When my parents were stationed (as the Salvation Army calls it) in Ottumwa, Iowa, our family devotions so impressed the Divisional Commander (somewhat like a bishop) Colonel Birger Justvig, that he asked us to go on stage at the next Divisional Council and show others what we did. So much for Jesus' caution about not praying before others as "play actors" or hypocrites!

For our family, everything moved toward Sunday, when we had Sunday School at 10 am, Holiness Meeting at 11, and the Salvation service at 7 pm. Except for the Lord's Prayer, every prayer was extemporaneous and in true "holiness" style — offered dramatically, earnestly, and with great emotion. I found this suffocating to my spirit, and filled with the "Jesus weejus lift up blah, blah, blah"

wordiness. Since the Salvation Army didn't have a formal, set lectionary, I never heard anyone read our Lord's teaching about prayer in St. Matthew 6:5-7 — our "lectionary" was whatever the officer believed God wished for the people to hear, which generally happened to be the officer's favorite passages.

I was in my late teens when I first encountered C. S. Lewis' comments on prayer. He wrote that he didn't like extemporaneous prayer in worship, because he was constantly judging the theological content of what was being said, and thus not able to join completely in the prayer. He also distinguished between "liturgy" — the public prayers of the Church — and private devotions for an individual or group, taken from what St. Paul writes in I Corinthians 11-14. To this day, this is how I distinguish between public prayer and private prayer.

When I was first invited to an Episcopal Church, I was living and studying in Madison, Wisconsin. (To my mother, Madison was the unholy city; if I had to go to college, she wanted me to go to Asbury or Greenville.) A pretty student by the name of Mary Beth told me about Evensong, which was held every Saturday night at 6 pm at Grace Episcopal Church on the capitol square, and they offered supper afterwards. I went. I heard some of the most beautifully phrased prayers I had ever encountered, and all sung or said in a dignified way. I had discovered Anglican liturgy. Using the plainsong, we sang the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis from the 1928 BCP. "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word". One prayer, sung very simply, was this:

*Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend*

*us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

I began crying, which I know is against custom in the Episcopal Church. I loved this worship. It wasn't dry or "formal" in a way that at times I hear the Book of Common Prayer derided. I had come home. Since the age of nine, I had known God was calling me to be a minister — I simply hadn't known which church!

In the Episcopal Church, I found a community of faith in Christ, one which knew how to pray. I was baptized a year later, and loved receiving Christ's very Body and Blood. I learned to listen to God, especially in the music of Tallis — his "Spem in Alium" always blows me away. The hymnal enables me to pray, "I bind unto myself today the Strong Name of the Trinity, by invo-

cation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three".

Today, I pray as a priest the Church's prayers — the Offices: Morning and Evening Prayer — for the basis of my private prayer. I am led to prayer while studying the Scriptures of the lectionary on which my sermon will be based, by listening to sacred music, at the hospital, visiting shut-ins, during counseling sessions, when someone asks about becoming a Christian, silently when I don't know how to pray and I wait upon God, at Blessings before meals, even the Angelus when running errands tries my patience to its limit!

I pray in bed and ask God's help for sleep, and to place in God's hands my constant anxieties. (I read about John Updike doing the same thing in one of the obituaries about him.)

And I have my favorite prayers memorized from the treasury that is the Book of Common Prayer. "Forasmuch as without thee, we are not able to please thee. Grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, for the love of thy Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, Amen." (BCP p. 182) And I pray Rite II as well: "O God, you manifest in your servants the signs of your presence: Send upon us the Spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (BCP p. 125)

Finally, I pray in the gift of Christian community on Sundays in the chief form of worship, the Holy Eucharist. Sunday by Sunday, I am grateful for this gift of our Lord's in which we remember the acts by which he saved us and all the whole world. My week still moves toward the Day of

our Lord's Resurrection, and the opportunity to join with others in thanking God for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

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## THE PRIEST'S PERSONAL COLLECT: A PRAYER TO RENEW THE PASTOR

THE REV. MATTHEW COWDEN  
RECTOR, ST. MICHAEL & ALL  
ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
SOUTH BEND, IN

At the heart of the induction ceremony in a *Celebration of a New Ministry* (BCP p. 559-565), the priest who has been newly called to lead the congregation kneels in the midst of the church and offers a personal prayer to God, witnessed by the people. It is at once an humble submission to the call of priestly leadership and a personal cry for divine assistance in fulfill-

ing that call. The prayer given for this purpose (BCP pp. 562-563) is, regretfully, rarely heard or recalled beyond that singular moment. Given that these ceremonies are only conducted once in a priest's tenure and that, these days, new rites of institution are often employed, it is perhaps not surprising that this little gem is not more frequently in a priest's mind. However, I believe this Collect, however, provides a particularly personal and pastoral prayer for the priest that, with more regular use, properly reorients and renews the pastoral call.

Admittedly, this prayer does not flow as well as other, more long-lived Anglican standards. The richer, more well-known *Prayer of Self Dedication*, ("..so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds...", BCP 832) flows better and can absorb the intentions of the heart with greater ease. Yet, while that prayer asks

for similar spiritual gifts with more fluidity than the prayer said by the priest in *Celebration of a New Ministry*, it is not unique to the presbyteral office. No other personal, liturgical prayer in our Anglican tradition is. The prayer said by the priest in *New Ministry* is the only prayer with such long, liturgical use that is specifically said by the priest on behalf of his or her priestly ministry.

This prayer originated with William Smith in 1799, who composed it for use in the then-newly-written Connecticut liturgies. Previous rites for the institution of new rectors had been mostly legalistic ceremonies that reflected the medieval history of feudal land ownership. The new American church, however, gave the older rituals of induction a more personal, even emotional, slant, one that reflected the more effusive American spirituality. This

prayer, written to be prayed by the priest to God for others to hear, uses the pronouns “I” “me” and “my” no less than fourteen times. It begins “with an allusion to Matthew 8:8, [and] centers on the primary duties of the priest as a minister of the word and sacraments, as a teacher, and as a person of prayer.” (Marion J. Hatchett: *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, 538)

In such personal use, those “primary duties of the priest” form a litany of eleven self-referencing pleas that, when read with all humility, reveal the fragile nature of what it means to be a human being called to do the work of ordained leadership. Behind these pleas, we can hear the concern of a very human pastor who hopes to be able to recall scripture stories as needed when tending to the flock, and to have a holy sensitivity to be able to apply them well. We can also hear the desire to

have the right words to preach for sermons and the lively attitude for prayers so that people will be moved to see God more clearly. In contemporary English, the priest prays this prayer:

*O Lord my God, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; yet you have called your servant to stand in your house, and to serve at your altar. To you and to your service I devote myself, body, soul, and spirit. Fill my memory with the record of your mighty works; enlighten my understanding with the light of your Holy Spirit; and may all the desires of my heart and will center in what you would have me do. Make me an instrument of your salvation for the people entrusted to my care, and grant that I may faithfully administer your holy Sacraments, and by my life and teaching set*

*forth your true and living Word. Be always with me in carrying out the duties of my ministry. In prayer, quicken my devotion; in praises, heighten my love and gratitude; in preaching, give me readiness of thought and expression; and grant that, by the clearness and brightness of your holy Word, all the world may be drawn into your blessed kingdom. All this I ask for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen (BCP 562-563)*

It is true that a priest is fully dependent on God for these gifts. It is also true that busy clergy, especially rectors or priests in charge, often forget that these gifts are the “primary duties” to which they are called. The holy gifts of recalling relevant scripture, and the ability to provide quickening prayer, inspired speech, and faithful administration

of the sacraments, are often considered secondary gifts of priestly leadership – particularly when the church needs a new roof, the conflict in the kitchen is calling for managerial change, and the budget is crying for more money for ministries.

The gifts and benefits asked for in this prayer are not as easily calculated as are a well-run church committee or social-service ministry project. A member of the flock more readily notices an error in the bulletin than an inferior sermon. An adequate recitation of a familiar prayer is more to be expected for clergy than an attempt to inspire renewed piety through study and rehearsal of other authorized prayers. Clergy may be tempted to spend more time in preparing the vestry agenda with the wardens than looking to see where the vestry’s current stories will have parallels in scripture.

The great gift of this Collect is that it reminds the priest of the primary work of the pastor. This prayer offers a corrective for the too-busy priest who may have forgotten the purpose for which she or he is ordained. It ought to be recollected and prayed more often than just at the institution of new ministry. Used regularly, perhaps at the start of a priest's work week, this Collect can assist properly re-ordering the priest's priorities. It provides a significant, liturgical reminder to the priest of the more subtle, yet nonetheless primary, work of prayer, preaching, study, teaching, sacramental administration, and pastoral care. This Collect also reminds the priest that these holy gifts arise out of the pastor's humble dependence on God. Prayed regularly, this Collect properly renews the pastoral call.

Alas! our weakness is very great, our wants are very many, our dependence on God for all things, all our lives long, is entire, and absolutely, and necessary, and there is no way in the world to gain help and supplies from God, but by prayer; so that it is as easy and as possible to preserve a natural life without daily bread, as a Christian life without daily prayer.

You cannot imagine the great benefit of learning psalms by heart; for when you are under any temptation, or are in any affliction, or when you lie waking in the night, or when sick, these psalms will come into your mind; and the devout repeating them, will yield most seasonable consolations.

~ Thomas Ken, 1637-1711;  
Bishop of Bath and Wells  
1684-1691

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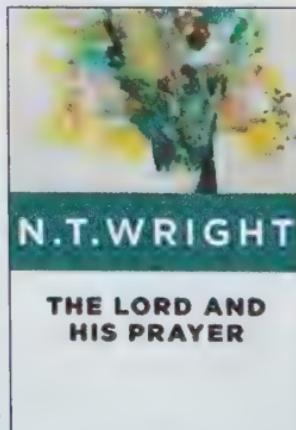
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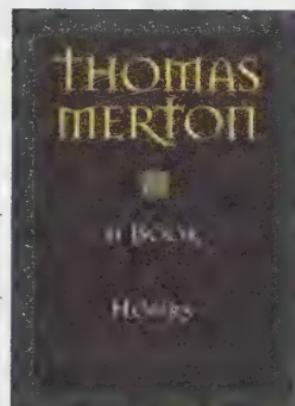


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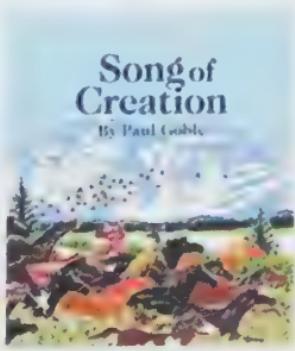
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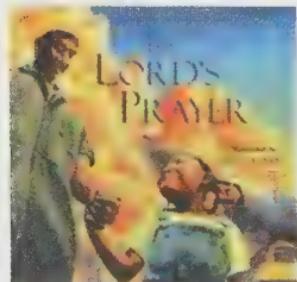
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*We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful*

*Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies.*

*We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.*

*Amen.*

— The Prayer of Humble Access (BCP, p. 337)

When asked to write a short reflection on my favorite prayer in the Book of Common Prayer, it was easy to decide which one to choose.

Written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer as part of the devotions just before receiving Holy Communion, what is now known as the *Prayer of Humble Access* was given that name in the Scottish revision of 1764.

It is drawn from the 1548 “Order of the Communion”. According to Massey Shepherd, “It was an original composition of Cranmer, though phrases were suggested to him by familiar medieval Collects and some passages in the Greek Liturgy of St. Basil.”

During the arguments over the current Book of Common Prayer (1979), many people singled out the *Prayer of Humble Access* for special criticism. Some published letters and lectures by proponents of the 1979 edition said it meant “groveling before God.” I remember the first time I heard that statement, and thinking they had missed the point of

the prayer. It is not groveling; instead, it is joyful: “always to have mercy.” How much more joyful can a prayer be? This prayer assures us that we are able to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ because of His mercy. The prayer points to the depth of God’s mercy: we are unworthy but we are still invited to receive.

Presumption and apathy are two of the most destructive elements of our current religious milieu. We presume that God and the life He calls us to are just one of the many options we have as we go about our daily lives. We can take it or leave it; it is not that important a choice. We have allowed all kinds of activities and interesting information to crowd out our spiritual lives as the center of our being. Therefore, we just do not care if we take God as seriously as we should. Spiritual matters no longer hold the prominent positions they once did.

Surely we can focus on the Eucharist as a way of re-centering our lives. “We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.” What a joyful note to celebrate whenever we gather as a community of faith. The Eucharist is the life-blood of our Christian experience.

We have dropped many of our old traditional ways of preparing to receive Communion. We used to pray before we even left the house, we fasted before receiving, we entered the church and knelt to pray, we remained centered and silent until the processional hymn. Even if we do not retain any of those traditions, I believe we are called upon at least to acknowledge our own unworthiness and God’s infinite mercy.

I am simply pointing out that, when we set aside some of the older practices, we actually

changed our entire thought process of how we approach the Eucharist. I was in seminary from 1975 to 1978, and the first General Convention to vote on the “new prayer book” was in 1976. I was not involved in any of the arguments over the prayer book. The Church voted, and I accepted the changes — and, having gone to Sewanee, if I had any questions, I had the privilege of having access to Marion Hatchett.

Somehow we can still celebrate the Eucharist as a communal meal and acknowledge the great privilege of receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth, coming into our lives, “that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.” God’s very being comes into the depths of our being. Surely we can acknowledge that, although we are unworthy of it, how glorious it is that

his mercy continues to reach out to us whenever we receive Communion. When we accept unto ourselves his Body and Blood, it really is not a casual encounter that is done by rote.

In the world’s discussions of our common life on this planet, the word mercy has been brought to the forefront, not only by the circumstances we face but by Pope Francis’ calling for the “Jubilee Year of Mercy.” What better prayer of ours to reflect on every time we approach the altar to receive the meal which sustains us and empowers us to carry out God’s work in the world. The Eucharist is an astonishing way for us to interact with God. The phrase “but thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy” rings through my soul whenever I receive communion.

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## CHANGED BY CHANGELESSNESS

THE REV. RALPH N. McMICHAEL,  
JR., ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH, EDWARDSVILLE, IL

*Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* — From the Order for Compline (BCP, p. 129)

One of the abiding dynamics of human living is change. However, our attitude toward, and our perspective of, this change varies throughout our life, and may even be altered during one given day. We begin life by undergoing rapid and truly life-forming changes. Our parents are changed by our changing, and we progress through the years only knowing a changing physical, emotional, and intellectual life. We know ourselves as changing

persons. And yet, this sense and reality of always changing does not last. We reach a state whereby what changes is not our physical selves, but the circumstances in which we live, how we live. We change jobs and homes, we marry and divorce, we have children, we have deaths in the family. Instead of being the change in our own lives, now it seems the lives of others change us. Old age is another stage of change. There are changes of addition, and there are changes of subtraction. We learn that change is not always welcomed or celebrated; change can lead to grieving, to sadness, and to weariness.

The weariness brought on “by the changes and chances of this life” could lead us to a resignation that life is just like that. We have this one life, and that means enduring the change that this peculiar life brings. We can be stoic or depressed by these changes, but

either way they are not going away. We could develop a keener sense of optimism, or we could heighten our powers of distraction, all for the sake of making it through these changes with some semblance of sanity and normalcy. Or, we could pray to "rest in your eternal changelessness." We could place our changing life before the unchanging life of God, but why would this bring rest, and is this rest an escape from changing? Is our turning to God in prayer the attempt to stop change from happening in our lives? Will God keep us from changing?

The incarnation of the Son of God, the Word becoming flesh, the life of Jesus of Nazareth, brought God's radical difference into our lives in order to make a difference. God's difference arrives to make different lives, to make a different world. God so loved the world that he sent his Son to change it, by the power of

the Holy Spirit. God is not an escape from the world, or someone we turn to when we are tired of living; Jesus came to bring abundant life, not a static one. Jesus entered into the changes and chances of this life not so they would no longer exist, but so that they may become the occasions to enter into his life, the life given to him from the unchanging Father, by the Holy Spirit who changes everyone, who is "the Lord and giver of life." The Father by the power of the Holy Spirit changed Jesus. We call it the resurrection. This is the change that overcomes all the changes of this life. God never changes, God is always this God. Yet, who this God is changes everything. God is not some object stuck in heaven. God's very life is always on the move, always alive among the three persons. So, when we are introduced to God's eternal changelessness, we are swept up into a life-changing reality and truth, into the love

that raises the dead.

We are baptized into the life of the Trinity. We are made a member of the Body of Christ. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Baptized persons are never left alone with their changes. They are not to endure life the best they can. The arc of their life is not going from more to less; it is always entering into the more, the more of God's life for them. Baptized into a death and resurrection like Jesus, we no longer have to come up with strategies to adapt to change, coping mechanisms, or elaborate methods of distraction; instead, we can take the radical step of acknowledging a lack of control over our own lives. Thus, we are not called to manage our lives but to offer them. We are called to be changed by the unchanging God. How do we offer ourselves in this way?

Since we live each day in the presence of God, as members

of the Body of Christ, we can face our days with honesty and hope. We can acknowledge that the changes and chances of this life do indeed make us weary. This weariness at the end of a day can be offered as a prayer that will accompany us through the night. When we enter the night with the prayer of the weary, those on whom change has been visited, we enter into the tomb of Jesus, into a death like his. The night then becomes not the end of the day, a dark and foreboding conclusion to this life, but a night that keeps vigil for the rise of the morning star, the dawn of the resurrection, raising us into a life like his. The days of this life are ended, the eternal day of resurrection begins. We rest now in the eternal changelessness of the God who never rests from seeking us out in the night to raise us into that day when tombs are emptied and that familiar stranger shows up in our fearful rooms: "Peace be with you."

# RETURNING TO OUR SOURCE

THE REV. ANDREW NUSSEY  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

*LORD of all power and might,  
who art the author and giver  
of all good things: Graft in our  
hearts the love of thy Name,  
increase in us true religion,  
nourish us with all goodness,  
and of thy great mercy keep  
us in the same; through Jesus  
Christ our Lord. Amen.*

— The Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity, Canadian BCP, 1962, p. 228 & p. 615

YHWH is beyond a word, or a cluster of words. The former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, in his book *Christ on Trial*, quotes Anita Mason's novel *The Illusionist*, in which Jesus is fancied as saying the following to the Apostle Peter: "There is a kind of truth which, when it is said, becomes untrue." With our God especially, this truth about untruth is true.

There is folly in wisdom, in knowing. In his ministry, Paul repeatedly attests to this required humility in the face of the unsayable and the unknowable: "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain" (1 Corinthians 3. 20; see also Psalm 94. 11).

The human problem is that we think we're so smart! We think we know the facts of the matter. This is the "original sin" rooted in the forbidden tree of knowledge in Eden. The fruit of such hungry grasping at knowledge is our own destruction. So much for being like God! Our foolish wisdom is so foolish, in fact, that we think we can know God and represent God in our "knowing." Yet the Name of the Lord cannot even be spoken. What are we to do with this utter, inescapable failing on our part?

This prayer is an answer to such failing. Our Lord is the

One of “all power and might.” We don’t have it, but God’s got it — and God, “the author and giver of all good things,” gives what he has to us.

How? By way of grafting. Nothing short of Divine Surgery is called for in this prayer. Grafting is a horticultural term referring to the joining of vascular tissues of one plant with another, so that the two may share one life together: it allows the weaker one to benefit from the infusion of the rooted life of the stronger one. One of the advantages of grafting is “precocity,” which is “the ability to induce fruitfulness without the need for completing the juvenile phase.” Does this not sound like a familiar necessity for us?

And so, by way of grafting, we can love the Name we can’t even speak. This is where humility sharply comes into play, and as such it makes

sense why this prayer should appear at the end of “A Penitential Service” in the Canadian *Book of Common Prayer* (1962).

If we can’t speak, we should listen. We should be receptive to Life. This is how we can have an increase of true religion and be nourished with goodness. Only the Giver’s mercy will grant us this.

Sharing the Divine Life (as in grafting) does not involve talking at God as if we know what we are talking about. Jean Vanier, in his book *From Brokenness to Community*, writes:

Our people are close to God, and yet they are so little and poor. They have known rejection and have suffered a great deal. I am always moved as I hear them speak of God. When somebody asked one of our men, Peter, if he liked to pray, he said that he

did. So the person continued and asked him what he did when he prayed. He replied: "I listen." Then the person asked what God says to him. Peter, a man with Down's Syndrome, looked up and said: "He just says, "You are my beloved son."

The poor in spirit have received richness which we, who are too full of words and ourselves, cannot yet fathom.

This prayer puts us firmly on the receiving end of grace. As such, it is about experience of God above anyone's impoverished explanation of God — that is, an explanation of an experience of what God *should* be, or *might* be for others, or *could* be for us. There are many lovers of words — entrenched in the safety of so-called "left-brain" thinking — who will out-of-hand dismiss the notion of direct-experience contact with God as easy,

soft, and unserious. I suspect they fear what God might say should they stop long enough to listen! The fear humans have of love is certainly not a new phenomenon.

YHWH is beyond a word. Thus, by grace, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (St. John 1. 14). In a direct, living, human relationship we know how to live the Divine Word in a way that takes us beyond all mortal images and words.

I believe that meditative prayer needs to be revived among the faithful if we are to be a people transformed by grace in a stunning way. Contemplative prayer is a real way of knowing that God alone is All in All, and that we, by grace, are incorporated into that All. Only by returning to our Source shall we know and live the promises of Christ.

## LEARNING HOW TO ENGAGE IN MISSION

THE REV. PHIL BERGHUIS  
ST. COLUMBA CHURCH, FRESNO, CA

*Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen.* — A Prayer for Mission (BCP, pp. 58, 101)

When I think of prayers in the BCP, one that bubbles to the surface of my mind more and more these days is the third prayer for mission used during Morning Prayer (found on p. 58 and 101.) The prayer was written by Bishop Charles Henry Brent while he was serving as a missionary bishop to the Philippines in

1907, so considering the history of our prayer book tradition, it's a fairly recent addition. As a missionary in the Philippines, it was expected that Brent would either minister exclusively to the Americans who were moving to the islands, or that he would reach out to the locals in the Philippines and try to convert them from Roman Catholicism to Anglicanism. Bishop Brent chose the third option and instead went to the non-Christian areas of the Philippines, prioritizing conversion to Christianity rather than conversion to Anglicanism. What Bishop Brent wrote in this prayer at that time serves as a summation of his view of mission, a view which we would do well to pray and meditate on more often.

The prayer starts as many others do, by addressing God and describing him in some way: in this case, the collect gives a brief summation of Jesus' roles

on the cross. It's that description of the cross that really struck me and attracted me to the prayer in the first place. It doesn't try to sugar coat it at all: Jesus is stretching out his arms on the cross, with its hard wood. It's not something that's easily done; it's painful. Next we're given the reason for the crucifixion, "that everyone might come within the reach of [his] saving embrace." It's reminiscent of John 3:17, that "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Note that it's not saying that everyone will reach out to God, but that everyone might come within that reach. As a missionary, Brent no doubt knew of many people who were given the gospel and disregarded it. Jesus in the same way loves us perfectly, despite the hard wood of the cross, the pain it involves, and the fact that some may refuse his saving embrace.

The prayer then shifts as it ceases to describe God and turns into a petition to him. It begins with a request that Jesus may clothe us in the Holy Spirit, his Spirit. This isn't a request for something new, but a petition for a strengthening of the Holy Spirit that we as Christians have been given in our baptism. And in a similar way, it's not some sort of abstract prayer for the Holy Spirit to be strengthened, it's done with a purpose behind it.

The next part is our purpose, the role we play in this whole scheme. "That we reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you." This isn't structured the way most people would probably interpret the prayer though. I'm sure most people hearing this would see this as a call for us as Christians to reach out in love for those around us who haven't heard of the gospel, who need Jesus in

their lives. That's only a small part of what's going on here. You see, we're "reaching forth our hands in love." Reaching isn't an imitation of Jesus from the first part of the prayer, the first part of the prayer says that Jesus "stretched out" his arms. Reaching in the first part of the prayer is used to describe our response to God. So in a way this has a double meaning. We should reach out to God in love, in response to his love for us, and one of the many ways we can accomplish this is by reaching out to those in the world who don't know God. This creates a shift in how many today would understand missions. It's not from one individual to another or one group to another, it's us in and out of our love for God sharing that love with others. It's us stirring this love for God in them. It's less about us individually and more about the Church as a whole. We get that confirmed at the end with the last bit of the

prayer, "for the honor of your Name." This is all about God.

Looking at the prayer as a whole you can see that this is all about love. Our love for others is an extension of the love we have for God, nothing for the love we have for God or even something rivaling it. Our love for God comes first, but the love for others is an illustration of that love.

The other big thing we should get from this prayer is that love isn't easy – God's love for us isn't something that's done without any difficulties. God loves us enough to die for us, and God loves us despite the fact that many people won't return that love. And that's something we need to remember in our lives: our love for others, in this case exemplified by evangelism and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, is something that is often hard for us, and we may meet with

people who turn us away. In this prayer, the focus isn't on improving the mission field or bringing more people to God, it's a prayer that God may strengthen us to do this work. This isn't a prayer asking for the work to be easier; it's asking for an increase of the Spirit to enable us to do the work.

You can see from this one prayer how all of us as Christians should engage in mission in our lives. Sure, there are professionals, missionaries and evangelists like Bp. Brent who do this for a living, but all of us as Christians should be involved in mission in our own setting. All of us as Christians, caught up in this relationship of love between Christ and his Church, need to respond to this love by sharing it, and we can with God's help.

## A CHRISTIAN IS NEVER ALONE

THE VERY REV. ANTHONY F. M.  
CLAVIER

VICAR: ST. THOMAS' EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH, GLEN CARBON, AND  
ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH, GRANITE CITY, IL

*O GOD, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*  
— Proper 19, the Sunday closest to September 14 (BCP, p. 182)

The door burst open and a sing-song voice, a sort of intoned speech, recited what was then the Collect for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity. There followed a huge pair of unintended eyebrows attached to a large, shambling, purple-clad figure. It was Michael Ramsey, then Archbishop of York. He had returned to Durham to give a series of public lectures. Within two years he would

succeed his old headmaster as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Whenever I read this prayer, now assigned, prosaically, to the Sunday nearest to September 14, I hear Dr. Ramsey's voice. Aside from that happy memory, and the fluidity of its traditional language, this collect is a model for good prayer writing. It is short, it concentrates on a single petition, and it is memorable. That it is short is, in itself, a mercy. That it concentrates on a single theme allows us to dig deeply into the petition. That it is easily memorized enables us to recollect it at will.

There is a (probably inaccurate) rule of thumb that suggests that the further we get from the prayers composed or compiled by Archbishop Cranmer, the longer, more multi-petitioned, and less memorable they become. I immediately think of "Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep

tonight...", but it was written by St. Augustine of Hippo, who knew how to write well even if he didn't know when to stop. Thank God he didn't have a word processor. There may be something to my theory after all. Even the modern version of the collect we are considering fails the memorable test. Why didn't the revisers merely substitute "you" for "thee"???

There's something extraordinarily exciting about overturning long used rites, prayers and ceremonies. It takes a certain hubris to propose one's own compositions as substitutes for habitual custom. Cranmer was one such innovator. However, he also had a facility for translating ancient Latin prayers into memorable English prose; for borrowing prayers from other authors, and occasionally even composing his own. The language he used was not that employed in the marketplace or at home; it was

tinged with an appropriate piety, which, within a century was no longer the language of the people, and yet both language and the rhythm of public liturgical piety restored and refreshed the hearts and minds of millions, until as late as the mid twentieth century, when it was declared obsolete.

However lovely, accessible, or memorable a prayer may be, however comfortable it may be to recite, an important factor is what it means. Note that I said “an important factor”; prayer is valid, effective, even if not always intellectually grasped. During our secular rituals, we don’t always invest what we say or do with intellectual content. We may say “How are you?” without really wanting to hear a catalog of ills. “I love you” isn’t always anything much more than a mantra. But even mantras contain deep reality. Nothing annoys the French more than foreign tourists who fail

to begin and end a request with the usual preludes to and conclusions of a sentence. The point of liturgical language is not that we are fully engaged in its meaning – proponents of extempore prayer are right: we don’t always mean what we are saying – but we do intend what is being said. The intent is expressed by participation more than recollection. The habit of corporate worship is essential in the same manner as the habit of private prayer, even if the content never varies. All of which is not to say that recollected prayer isn’t very important.

Without God, we can’t please God? Surely that can’t be true? Taken in a very narrow sense, perhaps the beginning statement isn’t very helpful. If you think this opening statement means that you are God’s special friend so he will hear you, whereas – add your list of persons, or groups – those who aren’t on God’s side, according

to the advice you give God as to those with whom he should befriend, and those he should reject, pray in vain. However, that is not what is meant.

The first part of the prayer puts us firmly in our place. We depend on God. It is only by living under mercy that we can please God. We can't bargain with God, or do special things to please him. God loves us, period. Humbling ourselves to accept what God gives us is the only way to please him. In a sense there is no greater assault on our pride than to accept unconditionally what is offered unconditionally.

We continue by praying that the third Person of the Trinity will direct and rule our hearts. Remember that in Cranmer's day, the heart was associated with motivation. It is God the Holy Spirit who inhabits the Church and because, through baptism, we also inhabit God's Church, our motivation, that which directs and rules

the way we "live, move and have our being", is possessed and driven by God's Spirit.

It is extraordinary that so much is contained in one sentence, but there is one more essential part to add: we pray that we may please God by relying on him. We pray that the Father will grant us, through the Holy Spirit, direction in the manner we live every part of our lives, sacred and secular; that God will be the sovereign of our motivation, how and why we make decisions. All this is made possible for us "through Jesus Christ our Lord." That familiar ending to prayers is often overlooked. It's not a necessary ending. We say the Lord's Prayer without a concluding attribution. In this case perhaps it is necessary. It reminds us that we have access to the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. The longer ending, "to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost..." makes this even clearer.

In an age when so many liturgical prayers fail the memory test, it is wonderful to have access to a collect like this, crammed full as it is with deep faith. I say it often, and particularly when I think I can't cope, and thus am in danger of trying to cope in my own fallible or fear-filled manner. To remember that it is God I trust, that in accepting God I please him, and that God will show me the way forward by directing and ruling my motivation, is such a relief. The relief is greater still when I recollect that this is a prayer of the Church. Through baptism, the Church is my family. I live in the context of a family which prays all over the world, a Church which prays in Paradise and in Heaven. I am never alone. I have no discrete or personal problems unknown to other Christians, whether alive or dead. Many Christians face the very same problems I do, or have faced them, and their prayers mingle with

my own. As God is my Father, the Church is my mother. To God be praise and glory.

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### COLIN POWELL

On his reaction to the modernized liturgy at his mother's funeral, in *My American Journey*, pp. 17, 290

I had definite ideas of what a church was supposed to be, like high Anglican church in which my family was raised in Jamaica, with spires, altars, priests, vestments, incense, and the flock genuflecting and crossing itself all over the place. The higher the church, the closer to God; that was how I saw it. . . .

I can still remember confirmation, watching those sweet, scrubbed children and the bishop seized them one by one by the head: "Defend, O Lord, this thy Child with

thy heavenly grace; that he may continue thine forever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come to thy everlasting kingdom." I would swing the incense burner, lustily chanting "Amen," convinced that I was witnessing the spirit of God entering that child's head like a bolt of lightning. St. Margaret's was imagery, pageantry, drama, and poetry. Times change, and the liturgy has changed with the times. I suppose I have to yield to the wisdom of the bishops who believed the 1928 Book of Common Prayer needed updating, just as it replaced its predecessor. But in the change, something was lost for me. Long years afterward, I buried my mother from St. Margaret's Church at a time when the old liturgy had been displaced by the new. God now seemed earthbound and unisexed, not quite the magisterial, heavenly father figure of my youth. It saddened me.

I miss the enchantment of the church in which I was raised.  
...

The funeral service [for his mother] was held at St. Margaret's, our old family church in the South Bronx. All that had meant so much to me, the imagery, the poetry, the liturgy, had been changed. The church had adopted a new service ... taken modernism to the extreme, rendering God genderless and ordinary. I knew my attachment to the forms of the past was more emotional than intellectual. But I found it disconcerting to discover that the rock of faith I was raised on could move. My mother received a ... low-key, nontriumphant burial service. I do not recall hearing the word "God" mentioned once. I found myself whispering, "Don't worry, Mom. We'll do something better later, because this is not the way you would want to go."

## OLIVER SACKS

In The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, (pp23-42),  
On the Power of Liturgy

In *The Lost Mariner*, Oliver Sacks wrote about a patient he called Jimmie, who suffered from “the severest, most devastating Korsakov’s” syndrome, meaning that he could not “remember isolated items for more than a few seconds, and ... a dense amnesia going back to 1945”. Patients like Jimmie, Sacks wrote, are “fossilised in the past, can only be at home, oriented, in the past. Time, for them, has come to a stop.”

One tended to speak of him, instinctively, as a spiritual casualty — a ‘lost soul’: was it possible that he had really been ‘de-souled’ by a disease? ‘Do you think he has a soul?’ I once asked the Sisters. They were outraged by my question,

*but could see why I asked it.* ‘Watch Jimmie in chapel,’ they said, ‘and judge for yourself.’ I did, and I was moved, profoundly moved and impressed, because I saw here an intensity and steadiness of attention and concentration that I had never seen before in him or conceived him capable of. I watched him kneel and take the Sacrament on his tongue, and could not doubt the fullness and totality of Communion, the perfect alignment of his spirit with the spirit of the Mass. Fully, intensely, quietly, in the quietude of absolute concentration and attention, he entered and partook of the Holy Communion. He was wholly held, absorbed, by a feeling. There was no forgetting, no Korsakov’s then, nor did it seem possible or imaginable that there should be; for he was no longer at the mercy of a faulty and fallible mechanism — that of meaningless sequences and memory traces — but was absorbed in an act, an act of his whole being, which

carried feeling and meaning in an organic continuity and unity, a continuity and unity so seamless it could not permit any break.

Clearly Jimmie found himself, found continuity and reality, in the absoluteness of spiritual attention and act. The Sisters were right — he did find his soul here. And so was Luria, whose words now came back to me: 'A man does not consist of memory alone. He has feeling, will, sensibility, moral being ... It is here ... you may touch him, and see a profound change.' Memory, mental activity, mind alone, could not hold him; but moral attention and action could hold him completely.

... Seeing Jim in the chapel opened my eyes to other realms where the soul is called on, and held, and stilled, in attention and communion. ...

Jimmie, who was so lost in extentional 'spatial' time, was perfectly organized in ... 'intentional' time; what was fugitive, unsustainable, as formal structure, was perfectly stable, perfectly held ... Moreover, there was something that endured and survived. If Jimmie was briefly 'held' by a task or puzzle ..., held in the purely mental challenge of these, he would fall apart as soon as they were done, into the abyss of his nothingness, his amnesia. But if he was held in emotional and spiritual attention ... the attention, its 'mood', its quietude, would persist for a while, and there would be in him a pensiveness and peace we rarely, if ever, saw during the rest of his life at the Home.

... I had wondered, when I first met him, if he was not condemned to a sort of 'Humean' froth, a meaningless fluttering on the surface of life, and whether there was any way of

transcending the incoherence of his Humean disease. Empirical science told me there was not – but empirical science, empiricism, takes no account of the soul, no account of what constitutes and determines personal being. Perhaps there is a philosophical as well as a clinical lesson here: that in Korakosov's, or dementia, or other such catastrophes, however great the organic damage and Humean dissolution, there remains the undiminished possibility of reintegration by art, by communion, by touching the human spirit; and this can be preserved in what seems at first a hopeless state of neurological devastation.

In the Collects, the priest “collects or comprises all the wants of the people and presents them unto God. The same reason will apply to the Collect for the day, which has always reference to some sentiments that may be *collected* from the Epistle and Gospel.”

~ John Henry Hobart, 1775-1830; Third Bishop of New York (1816-1830), one of the founders of General Theological Seminary, in A Companion for the Book of Common Prayer, 1805

## THE EXAMPLES SET BY THE SAINTS

TREY GARLAND  
AUSTIN, TX

*O God, the King of saints, we praise and magnify thy holy Name for all thy servants who have finished their course in thy faith and fear; for the blessed Virgin Mary; for the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs; and for all other thy righteous servants, known to us and unknown; and we beseech thee that, encouraged by their examples, aided by their prayers, and strengthened by their fellowship, we also may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*  
(BCP p. 489, from the Order for the Burial of the Dead)

Over the last nine years, I served as rector of two parishes – St. Andrew's, in Greenville, SC, and Grace Episcopal, in Georgetown, Texas. Between the two parishes, I conducted almost sixty funerals; it wasn't until after the first several that I discovered this prayer. For me, it shows the immense love God has for us by allowing us to be aided by the prayers of the saints and strengthened by their fellowship. Death, the great equalizer, not only reminds the living of our own mortality, but also takes people from us — some far before their time. For others, we pray for a quick death as they seem to linger. Yet, you and I remain — for now.

This prayer expresses thanks for all of God's servants who have died in the faith. I find this line particularly striking, perhaps because I tend to give thanks to God for things and events. Here, though, we are

giving thanks not only for the individual so recently lost, but for all of our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, stretching back through the centuries. It serves to remind us that they are, like us, not only servants of God, but that they have set us examples for how to live. It seems to me that one of the greatest ways we can remember someone is by trying to follow his example. I am reminded of one parishioner at St. Andrew's who had been a true silent servant — he was always around, always helping with the gardens and the grounds, never complaining, simply serving his church, silently and faithfully. His ministry and witness, to Christ and His Church, has stuck with me. That type of service is such a gift, because it isn't about trying to impress people, or work his way up the ladder, but simple and selfless giving. I try to emulate this when I can; if nothing else, it helps to keep the sin of pride

away, and allows me to focus on Jesus and His Church.

As an Anglo-Catholic, I place great importance on the intercession of the saints. If we acknowledge that Jesus speaks truth, then we must also acknowledge that the saints are, in fact, alive. The rebuking of the Sadducees appears in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew 22:32, Mark 12:27, Luke 20:38), and it should be a firm reminder to us that the dead are only dead to us, not to God. And in the presence of God, they are able to pray for us. No one *requires* a mediator to pray to God, but just as we ask and rely on the prayers of our friends and family, so should we seek and rely on the intercession of the saints. More than once, someone has approached me after a funeral to ask where I found this prayer, because 'it can't be Episcopalian; it says we are aided by the prayers of the saints.' They are always sur-

prised when I show them it is in the prayer book — there it is in black and white: the Episcopal Church acknowledges the intercession of the saints! We have become so accustomed to thinking along Protestant lines that we sometimes forget that Anglicanism is the middle way — and for it to be the middle, there must be two sides. Both as a priest and as a Christian, I have found great comfort in the knowledge that those who are already in the presence of God intercede for me and walk with me, that I may be supported until my earthly pilgrimage has ended.

To be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints means that we must strive to be one. I, for one, tend to fail at this often — but by the grace and love of God, I am able to get up and try again. That is the final reminder in this prayer: while we are not able to do it on our own, through the merits of Christ, we can!

Though we rely on the merits of Christ, we are called not to presume anything. Too many times I have seen people attend church only for funerals, weddings, and high holy days, “We’re too busy” or “Tom is involved in sports” — that second one, in particular, has always flummoxed me; you’re allowing your child’s sport to dictate whether you come and receive the sacred body and blood or not? Why not teach your child to put God first? Why are we, as adults, too busy to stop what we are doing, go to church, and give thanks to Him who made us and gave us all that we have? To partake of the inheritance we must strive for it, not make excuses about being too busy. If God’s Word is more precious than gold, then how can we treat the Eucharist as if it were no more important than a stale re-run of an old television show? We are called to strive for sainthood so that we might be partakers of some-

thing so amazing that we can-not even begin to fathom it.

The depth of this prayer has always entranced me. Short though it is, it has so much meat in it that I often stop before a funeral mass just to read it and rest in the words, allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work that needs to be done. Really, I suspect that all of the prayers can be opened up in this way, to allow us to not just say them, but to linger in them and let God work in us and inspire us to continue our pilgrimage. This particular prayer reminds me I am not alone, and I don't have to do it alone. It also reminds me that striving for sainthood is not simply one option among many, but the daily work of any Christian, that we might rest in the mercies of Christ when our time on earth has ended.

## DEATHS

### THE REV. HIMIE-BUDU YAKADE SHANNON, 61 In Chapel Hill, NC

Growing up as an acolyte at Trinity Cathedral in Monrovia, Liberia, he always wanted to be a priest. He graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in 1984, and was ordained in 1985. He served his curacy at Trinity Cathedral, Monrovia; after civil war broke out in Liberia, he and his family moved to Nigeria, where he was appointed Assistant to the Dean of the Cathedral at Victoria Island, Lagos. He went on to serve parishes in Virginia, Connecticut, and North Carolina, before being called as Rector of St. Andrew's Church, in Cleveland, OH, a historically African-American, Anglo-Catholic congregation, where he served until his death. He was a long-time member of Union of Black Episcopalians.

**THE REV. MARY ROBB**

**MANSFIELD, 75**

In Burlington, VT

Ordained deacon in 1994, and priest in 1995, she served parishes in New York, Maryland, and Vermont.

**THE REV. RICHARD DAVID**

**HART, 86**

In Dallas, TX

Ordained as an Anglican priest of the Diocese of St. Seraphim in Dallas in 2013, Richard served as Vicar of St Paul's Anglican Church.

**THE REV. EDWARD S.**

**WARFIELD JR., 83**

In Sykesville, MD

A graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary, he was ordained a deacon in 1962 and a priest in 1963. He served various parishes in Maryland and as a reserve chaplain with a Maryland National Guard medical unit; he was also active in the civil rights movement.

**THE REV. JAMES ROBINSON**

**WHITTEMORE, 90**

In Falmouth, Maine

He earned degrees from Yale University (with a break for service in WWII), Episcopal Divinity School, and New York Theological Seminary, and served parishes in Michigan, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Maine.

**THE REV. DR. BARBARA**

**JEANNE HARTLEY SCHLACHTER, 71**

In Iowa City, IA

A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, and Eastern Baptist Seminary, in 1977, she became one of the first women to be ordained to the Episcopal priesthood. She helped to found the Episcopal Women's Caucus, and served parishes in New York, Ohio, and Iowa.

**THE REV. WESLEY  
WUBBENHORST, 62**

In Annapolis, MD

Ordained in 1989, he served as the diocesan youth minister in Maryland for 10 years, as well as serving parishes in Maryland, Newark, and Connecticut. He was passionate about working with Latino immigrants, helped develop workshops for prevention of domestic violence, and led safe church trainings.

**THE REVEREND CANON  
STEPHEN WRIGHT PRICE, 73**

In Philadelphia, PA

A graduate of Wesleyan University and Yale Divinity School, he was active in the civil rights movement, served parishes in Pennsylvania, and, in more recent years, worked to provide low-cost housing for seniors of modest means.

**THE REV. DR. E. GENE  
BENNETT, 74**

In Brookhaven, MS

A graduate of the University

of Tennessee, School of Theology at the University of the South, Sewanee, and Vanderbilt University, he served parishes in Mississippi, Arizona, and California.

**THE REV. JOHN WILLIAM  
CAMPBELL, 61**

In New Braunfels, TX

A graduate of Louisiana State University and the Seminary of the Southwest, he was ordained a priest in 1991. He served parishes in Louisiana and Texas.

**THE REV. SIONE HALAPUA,  
75**

In Chico, CA

Born in Nukualofa, Kingdom of Tonga, he later graduated from the Claremont School of Theology, and also studied at St. John's Baptist College in Fiji, and St. John's College in New Zealand. He was ordained to the diaconate in 1972, and to the priesthood in 1973, and served parishes in California.



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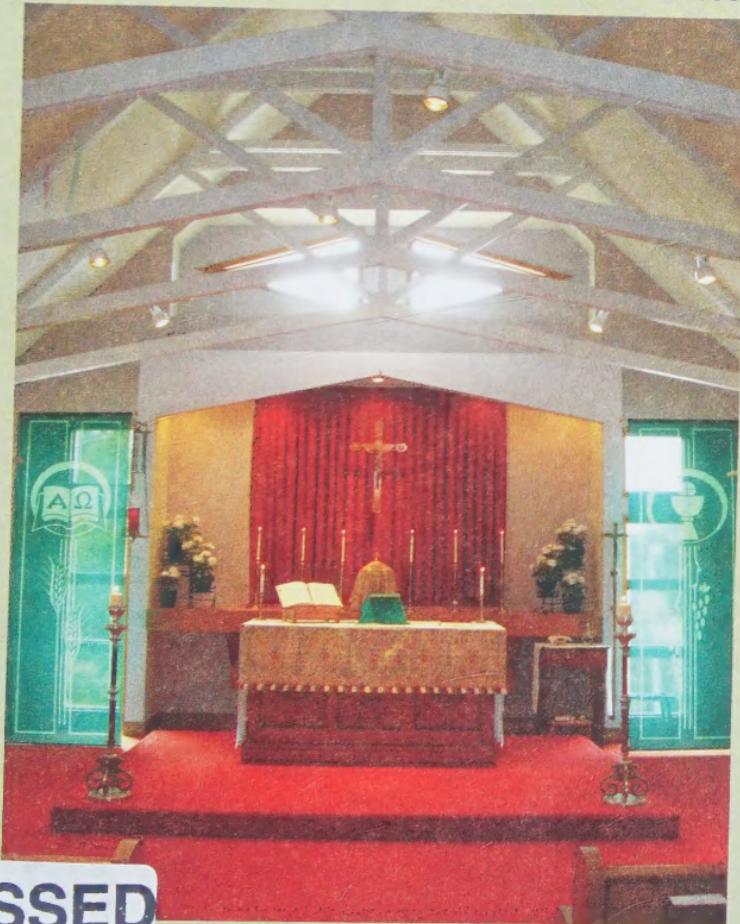
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